

106TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1753

To promote the research, identification, assessment, exploration, and development of methane hydrate resources, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 11, 1999

Mr. DOYLE (for himself, Mr. CALVERT, and Mr. COSTELLO) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Science, and in addition to the Committee on Resources, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To promote the research, identification, assessment, exploration, and development of methane hydrate resources, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Methane Hydrate Re-
5 search and Development Act of 1999”.

6 **SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

7 In this Act:

1 (1) CONTRACT.—The term “contract” means a
2 procurement contract within the meaning of section
3 6303 of title 31, United States Code.

4 (2) COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT.—The term “co-
5 operative agreement” means a cooperative agree-
6 ment within the meaning of section 6305 of title 31,
7 United States Code.

8 (3) DIRECTOR.—The term “Director” means
9 the Director of the National Science Foundation.

10 (4) GRANT.—The term “grant” means a grant
11 awarded under a grant agreement, within the mean-
12 ing of section 6304 of title 31, United States Code.

13 (5) INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.—The
14 term “institution of higher education” means an in-
15 stitution of higher education, within the meaning of
16 section 1201(a) of the Higher Education Act of
17 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1141(a)).

18 (6) METHANE HYDRATE.—The term “methane
19 hydrate” means a methane clathrate that—

20 (A) is in the form of a methane-water ice-
21 like crystalline material; and

22 (B) is stable and occurs naturally in deep-
23 ocean and permafrost areas.

1 (7) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means
2 the Secretary of Energy, acting through the Assist-
3 ant Secretary for Fossil Energy.

4 (8) SECRETARY OF DEFENSE.—The term “Sec-
5 retary of Defense” means the Secretary of Defense,
6 acting through the Secretary of the Navy.

7 (9) SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.—The term
8 “Secretary of the Interior” means the Secretary of
9 the Interior, acting through the Director of the
10 United States Geological Survey.

11 **SEC. 3. METHANE HYDRATE RESEARCH AND DEVELOP-**
12 **MENT PROGRAM.**

13 (a) IN GENERAL.—

14 (1) COMMENCEMENT OF PROGRAM.—Not later
15 than 180 days after the date of enactment of this
16 Act, the Secretary, in consultation with the Sec-
17 retary of Defense, the Secretary of the Interior, and
18 the Director, shall commence a program of methane
19 hydrate research and development.

20 (2) DESIGNATIONS.—The Secretary, the Sec-
21 retary of Defense, the Secretary of the Interior, and
22 the Director shall designate individuals to carry out
23 this section.

24 (3) MEETINGS.—The individuals designated
25 under paragraph (2) shall meet not later than 120

1 days after the date on which all such individuals are
2 designated and not less frequently than every 120
3 days thereafter to—

4 (A) review the progress of the program
5 under paragraph (1); and

6 (B) make recommendations on future ac-
7 tivities to occur subsequent to the meeting.

8 (b) GRANTS, CONTRACTS, COOPERATIVE AGREE-
9 MENTS, INTERAGENCY FUNDS TRANSFER AGREEMENTS,
10 AND FIELD WORK PROPOSALS.—

11 (1) ASSISTANCE AND COORDINATION.—The
12 Secretary may award grants or contracts to, or enter
13 into cooperative agreements with, institutions of
14 higher education and industrial enterprises to—

15 (A) conduct basic and applied research to
16 identify, explore, assess, and develop methane
17 hydrate as a source of energy;

18 (B) assist in developing technologies re-
19 quired for efficient and environmentally sound
20 development of methane hydrate resources;

21 (C) undertake research programs to pro-
22 vide safe means of transport and storage of
23 methane produced from methane hydrates;

1 (D) promote education and training in
2 methane hydrate resource research and re-
3 source development;

4 (E) conduct basic and applied research to
5 assess and mitigate the environmental impacts
6 of hydrate degassing (including both natural
7 degassing and degassing associated with com-
8 mercial development); and

9 (F) develop technologies to reduce the
10 risks of drilling through methane hydrates.

11 (2) COMPETITIVE MERIT-BASED REVIEW.—
12 Funds made available under paragraph (1) shall be
13 made available based on a competitive merit-based
14 process.

15 (c) CONSULTATION.—The Secretary may establish an
16 advisory panel consisting of experts from industry, institu-
17 tions of higher education, and Federal agencies to—

18 (1) advise the Secretary on potential applica-
19 tions of methane hydrate; and

20 (2) assist in developing recommendations and
21 priorities for the methane hydrate research and de-
22 velopment program carried out under subsection
23 (a)(1).

24 (d) LIMITATIONS.—

1 (1) ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES.—Not more
2 than 5 percent of the amount made available to
3 carry out this section for a fiscal year may be used
4 by the Secretary for expenses associated with the ad-
5 ministration of the program carried out under sub-
6 section (a)(1).

7 (2) CONSTRUCTION COSTS.—None of the funds
8 made available to carry out this section may be used
9 for the construction of a new building or the acquisi-
10 tion, expansion, remodeling, or alteration of an exist-
11 ing building (including site grading and improve-
12 ment and architect fees).

13 (e) RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SECRETARY.—In car-
14 rying out subsection (b)(1), the Secretary shall—

15 (1) facilitate and develop partnerships among
16 government, industry, and institutions of higher edu-
17 cation to research, identify, assess, and explore
18 methane hydrate resources;

19 (2) undertake programs to develop basic infor-
20 mation necessary for promoting long-term interest in
21 methane hydrate resources as an energy source;

22 (3) ensure that the data and information devel-
23 oped through the program are accessible and widely
24 disseminated as needed and appropriate;

1 (4) promote cooperation among agencies that
2 are developing technologies that may hold promise
3 for methane hydrate resource development; and

4 (5) report annually to Congress on accomplish-
5 ments under this section.

6 **SEC. 4. AMENDMENTS TO THE MINING AND MINERALS POL-**
7 **ICY ACT OF 1970.**

8 Section 201 of the Mining and Minerals Policy Act
9 of 1970 (30 U.S.C. 1901) is amended—

10 (1) in paragraph (6)—

11 (A) in subparagraph (F), by striking
12 “and” at the end;

13 (B) by redesignating subparagraph (G) as
14 subparagraph (H); and

15 (C) by inserting after subparagraph (F)
16 the following:

17 “(G) for purposes of this section and sec-
18 tions 202 through 205 only, methane hydrate;
19 and”;

20 (2) by redesignating paragraph (7) as para-
21 graph (8); and

22 (3) by inserting after paragraph (6) the fol-
23 lowing:

24 “(7) The term ‘methane hydrate’ means a
25 methane clathrate that—

1 “(A) is in the form of a methane-water ice-
2 like crystalline material; and

3 “(B) is stable and occurs naturally in
4 deep-ocean and permafrost areas.”.

5 **SEC. 5. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

6 There are authorized to be appropriated to the Sec-
7 retary of Energy to carry out this Act—

8 (1) \$5,000,000 for fiscal year 2000;

9 (2) \$7,500,000 for fiscal year 2001;

10 (3) \$10,000,000 for fiscal year 2002;

11 (4) \$10,000,000 for fiscal year 2003; and

12 (5) \$10,000,000 for fiscal year 2004.

13 Amounts authorized under this section shall remain avail-
14 able until expended.

15 **SEC. 6. SUNSET.**

16 Section 3 of this Act shall cease to be effective after
17 the end of fiscal year 2004.

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